

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1 1. A method of characterizing a system, the method comprising:  
 2 logging outages of the system;  
 3 measuring one or more additional indicia associated with each outage, the one  
 4 or more additional indicia selected from frequency, duration and  
 5 business impact of the outage; and  
 6 calculating a Figure of Merit (FOM) based on contributions of each outage  
 7 weighted in accordance with the associated additional indicia.

1 2. The method of claim 1,  
 2 wherein the FOM includes a business impact weighted availability, reliability  
 3 or maintainability measure.

1 3. The method of claim 1,  
 2 wherein the FOM includes a business impact weighted server panic index.

1 4. The method of claim 1,  
 2 wherein the outage logging is performed on a system-wide basis.

1 5. The method of claim 1,  
 2 wherein the outage logging is performed for individual subsystems, services  
 3 and functionality of the characterized system.

1 6. The method of claim 1,  
 2 wherein the outage logging encodes a level of performance degradation.

1 7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
 2 remotely monitoring the outages and the one or more additional indicia; and  
 3 performing the FOM calculating off-site from the characterized system.

1 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
 2 using the FOM as a factor in an employee compensation scheme.

1 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 evaluating a service level commitment using the FOM.

1 10. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 calculating an incentive fee using the FOM.

1 11. The method of claim 1,  
2 wherein the characterized system includes an information system.

1 12. A computer program product encoded in one or more computer readable  
2 media and comprising:  
3 instructions executable to obtain event data for one or more monitored  
4 systems;  
5 instructions executable to associate elements of the event data with business  
6 impacts thereof on the monitored system; and  
7 instructions executable to calculate a Figure of Merit (FOM) including  
8 contributions for each event data element weighted in accordance with  
9 the associated business impacts.

1 13. The computer program product of claim 12,  
2 wherein the event data include one or more of outages, service interruptions  
3 and performance degradations of the monitored systems and individual  
4 subsystems, services or functionality thereof.

1 14. The computer program product of claim 12,  
2 wherein the one or more computer readable medium are selected from the set  
3 of a disk, tape or other magnetic, optical, or electronic storage medium  
4 and a network, wireline, wireless or other communications medium.

1 15. A monitoring system comprising:  
2 an interface to event data for one or more monitored systems or subsystems;  
3 means for associating elements of the event data with business impacts  
4 thereof; and

5 means for calculating a Figure of Merit (FOM) including contributions for the  
6 event data weighted in accordance with the associated business  
7 impacts.

1 16. The monitoring system of claim 15,  
2 wherein the means for calculating a Figure of Merit (FOM) includes  
3 instructions executable on the monitoring system to weight  
4 contributions to an availability, reliability or maintainability index in  
5 accordance with the associated business impact of each event on the  
6 monitored systems or subsystems.

7 17. The monitoring system of claim 15,  
8 wherein the event data include incidence and duration of server panics; and  
9 wherein the means for calculating a Figure of Merit (FOM) includes  
10 instructions executable on the monitoring system to weight  
11 contributions of each server panic to a server panic index in  
12 accordance with a duration thereof.

1 18. The monitoring system of claim 15, further comprising:  
2 one or more state tracking tools executable on one or more of the monitored  
3 systems to supply the event data.